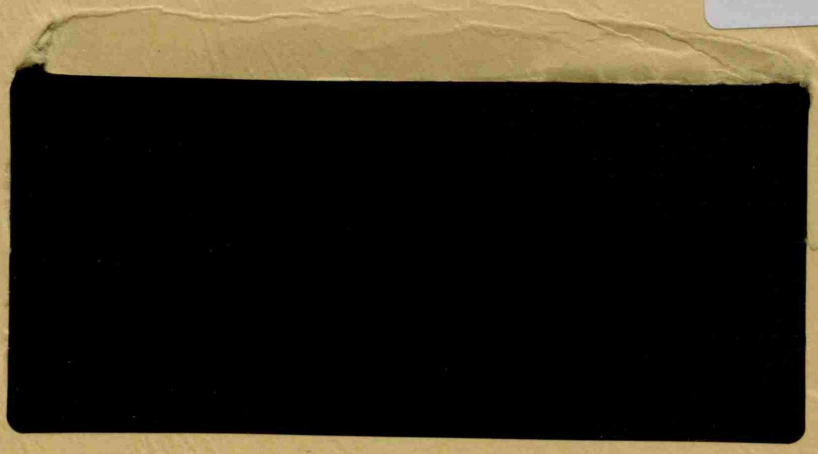
ROSS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL CORPORATION



A CONSULTANT STUDY

of the

ROSS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL CORPORATION

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ROSS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL CORPORATION

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CHAPTER I

THE ROSS TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY

The Ross Township School Corporation is located in the east central portion of Lake County, Indiana. Until relatively recently the entire forty-nine square mile area was agricultural in nature. The massive industrial and commercial developments in the Chicago area and along the southern edges of Lake Michigan have not as yet extended into the Ross Township area. Located as it is immediately south of the City of Gary, Ross Township has, in recent years, become a rapidly enlarging residential area with residents finding employment in the industrial and commercial plants of the Calumet region. As the population of the township has grown there has been a corresponding increase in a wide variety of business, trade, and commercial activities essential to supporting the population.

Ross Township is located so as to have tremendous potentials for continued growth in general population as well as business, commercial, and industrial development. A number of factors present within the total situation combine to support the conclusion that the entire area will experience tremendous growth and development in future years. Included among the factors are the following:

1. Ross Township is situated within minutes of the densely populated and heavily industrialized areas surrounding the southern portion of Lake Michigan.

2. Ross Township provides thousands of acres of land which is ideally located for residential, trade, business, commercial, and/or industrial development.

3. Ross Township is served by an excellent network of major highways and secondary traffic arteries. US Highway 30 runs east and west through the middle of the township. Interstate Highway 65 crosses the township north and south approximately in the middle of the district. These two main arteries for motor vehicle transportation provide easy access to all areas within the immediate region and the nation.

During recent years the school community has experienced rapid increases in total population as well as extensive business, commercial, and industrial development. If and as the economic boom forecast for the entire northwestern area of Indiana becomes a reality economic and general population growth will be experienced in Ross Township. With the continued development of the port and all supporting facilities, the possible creation of a major commercial airport and the continued expansion of commercial and industrial enterprises in the area the future fate of the entire area seems settled.

Table 1.1 has been developed from the United States Bureau of Census reports to show what has happened in terms of general population growth within Ross Township. Presented through Table 1.1 is the total population of Ross Township and for Lake County for each decade from 1940 through 1970. It will be noted that the 1950 general population for Ross Township was more than ninety per cent higher than ten years earlier. Between 1950 and 1960 the general population of the township increased by over 122 per cent. The increase during the past decade has been 94.2 per cent. In light of the dramatic total increases in population experienced each decade the conclusion that continued future growth will be realized appears safe and defensible. It will

be noted that during the same thirty year period Lake County has also increased in general population. It will be noted, however, that the percent of increase has been relatively modest. In fact, the total county only increased by some 6.4 per cent between 1960 and 1970.

TABLE 1.1

General Population Growth of Ross Township and Lake County
1940 Through 1970*

	1940	1950	1960	1970	Increase 1960-70
Ross Township	3,482	6,676	14,854	28,845	94.2%
Independence Hill	--	--	1,824	--	
Merrillville-Lattaville Rexville	--	--	--	15,918	
Lake County	293,195	368,152	513,269	546,253	6.4%
Ross Township Population as % of County	1.18%	1.81%	2.89%	5.28%	

* United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census Reports.

The information presented on the bottom line of Table 1.1 is most interesting. In 1940 the population of Ross Township was but 1.18 per cent of the total population of Lake County. In 1950 the percentage had increased to 1.81 per cent. In 1960 the general population of Ross Township had increased to 2.89 per cent of the total population of Lake County. In 1970 the ratio had increased to 5.28 per cent of the county population. These figures show rather dramatically that much of the growth that has taken place within Ross Township has come from other areas of Lake County as well as from in-migration of individuals from out of county. The information also shows that each

decade the percent of population in Ross Township as compared to the county as a whole has increased very rapidly. Will the percentage ratio continue to increase in the years ahead? At this point it is not possible to say with certainty. All past evidence, however, would lead to the conclusion that there will be some continued increase in the percentage of the total population of the county residing in Ross Township in years ahead.

Table 1.1 shows in quite dramatic fashion the past history of general population growth for Ross Township and for Lake County. While it is expected that the total rate of growth in Lake County will slow down somewhat in the years ahead it does not necessarily follow that the rate of growth for Ross Township would also reflect a downward trend in rate of growth. Depending upon such factors as the expansion of sanitary sewer facilities, the construction of proposed commercial, industrial, and service projects within the district and general improvement of the economy within the region and the nation at large the immediate future of Ross Township will be determined. In terms of long-range planning it would seem defensible to assume that the time will come when Ross Township is completely developed and integrated into the massive megalopolis predicted for the area from Milwaukee through Chicago to South Bend and beyond.

During recent years the Lake and Porter County Regional Planning Commission as well as other agencies have made studies and predictions for the total region and for the various communities within Lake and Porter counties. Table 1.2 reflects a projection made by the Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission. It

shows the projections of general population for Lake County and for Ross Township for each five year period from 1970 through the year 2000. The projection anticipates an increase of some 365,000 persons for Lake County during the thirty year period. The projection also indicates that Ross Township will grow from the 28,845 people reported in the 1970 census to 79,000 persons by the year 2000. The figures reflect a projected increase in general population for Ross Township of more than 50,000 people during the thirty year period. Table 1.2 also includes some additional information of interest. In column four the percentage ratio of projected Ross Township general population to the total population of Lake County has been computed. It will be noted that the percentage figures increase each five year period throughout the projection. The increasing percentages appear to be a logical continuation of the actual percentages as shown in Table 1.1. Whether or not these figures will be realized as predicted cannot be determined at this time. It is interesting to note that one of the major planning organizations for Lake County have published data reflecting a continued dramatic increase in general population for the Ross Township school community.

A 1970 study conducted by the Economic Research Division of the Indiana Department of Commerce predicted an increase in general population for Lake County of from twenty-five to fifty per cent by 1985. If the twenty-five per cent prediction should prove to be accurate the total population of the county in 1985 would total approximately 672,850 persons. If Ross Township should continue to serve 5.28 per cent of the total population of Lake County the general population of the

school community in 1985 would reach some 35,550 persons. Should the fifty per cent projection prove to be accurate the total population of the county would be approximately 820,000 persons and Ross Township would have a general population of some 43,300 persons.

TABLE 1.2

The Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission - Projections of General Population for Lake County and Ross Township

	Lake County	Ross Twp.	Percentage Ratio	Projected Pupils
1970	546,253	28,845	5.28	7,289
1975	603,500	35,000	5.79	8,841
1980	625,000	41,000	6.56	10,356
1985	689,000	49,000	7.11	12,377
1990	714,000	57,500	8.05	14,524
1995	786,500	68,000	8.64	17,176
2000	810,000	79,000	9.75	19,955

Several different types of population projections have been made for Lake County and the Regional Planning Commission. The William S. Lawrence and Associates of Chicago made a study of general population of Lake County and made projections for each five year period through 1985. The projections made by Lawrence and Associates were identified as being realistic and accurate for purposes of future planning. The Lawrence study projected a general population for Lake County of 545,000 persons for 1970. The actual general population reported by US Census Bureau was slightly higher. A total of 585,000 persons has been projected for 1975 while in 1980 the number is expected to increase to 625,000 persons. The 1985 population of Lake County projected by the Lawrence Associates is 669,500 persons. If the percentage of Ross

Township general population as compared to the total for Lake County continues at the 5.28 per cent ratio the total population of Ross Township would reach 35,000 persons by 1985. Should the percentage ratio increase, as would seem most likely, the general population by 1985 could reach from 40,000 to 45,000 persons.

It is generally recognized that as general population increases the number of youngsters of school age will increase proportionately. In order to secure some insight into the possible numbers of students to be served, should various projections prove to be accurate, some additional calculations were made. It was computed that in 1970 the pupil population of Ross Township School Corporation was slightly more than twenty-five per cent of the total population of the township. Assuming that this percentage would hold into the future it is possible to develop some approximation as to the numbers of school pupils to be served. For example, in Table 1.2 it is projected that Ross Township will have a general population of 49,000 persons in 1985. If the student population should continue to be 25.26 per cent of the total there would be some 12,377 pupils within the school corporation at that time. In like fashion by 1990 the total number of students would increase to 14,524 students. By the turn of the century, if the same computations are made, the student population would increase to almost 20,000 students.

On the other hand if the projections made by the William S. Lawrence and Associates of Chicago for the Lake and Porter County Regional Planning Commission are used as the basis for computation, the numbers of students to be served in 1985 would be in excess of 10,000 assuming

that the general population would reach approximately 40,000 persons. Although pupil population projections based upon past actual experience are included in a separate section of this report, it is interesting to project the impact on school enrollments in light of the projections made for general population increases within the school system.

In light of such data as are available the conclusion that Ross Township will continue to increase in terms of general population can be defended. Data studied indicate that the rate of growth may slow somewhat in the years ahead. Over a longer span of years, however, it would seem defensible to conclude that the general population of Ross Township will continue to increase until such time as all of available land area within the school district is completely utilized for business, commercial, industrial, or service institutions and all residential areas have become completely saturated with single and/or multiple dwelling units. The rate at which such development will be experienced and the balance of residential and/or industrial commercial development which eventuates will be determined by the general economic, political, social, and ethnic considerations within the general area.

During recent years much has been written in magazines and newspapers concerning the decrease in birthrate experienced throughout the United States. Attention has been called to the fact that many communities are losing population rather than growing. Estimates of national growth have been revised downward reflecting the belief that while the total population will continue to increase the rate of that increase will be considerably slowed. Even though records show that people are living longer than ever before the slowdown has come primarily as a result of the decrease in birthrate.

A recent report from the National Center for Health Statistics stated that the nation's birthrate has fallen to the lowest level in the history of the United States. The report indicates that if the present level continues zero population growth would be achieved from within forty to fifty years. A number of reasons have been suggested to explain the phenomenon. Although there is no conclusive proof that any of the reasons or various reasons in combination, have caused the decline there is a conviction that all have contributed. The various forces which have done much to influence life styles of Americans include a wide range. It has been pointed out that the general economic uncertainty experienced during the past few years with the high rate of unemployment and escalating inflation has caused married couples in the usual childbearing ages to postpone having children until such time as conditions improve. A drop in birthrates typically accompany a period of economic depression.

It has also been suggested that the so-called revolt of young people against the establishment has caused a significant change in attitude, beliefs, and life styles of millions of citizens in the United States and around the world. During the past ten years general attitudes toward morality, government, the establishment, elements of success, individuality, rights, purposes of life, religion, and many other aspects of American life have undergone challenge and change. The women's liberation movement, more extensive participation of women in the labor force as well as liberalized laws and attitudes relative to abortion and birth control have also been influential forces.

During the past two or three years many school systems in Indiana have experienced a decrease in enrollments at the kindergarten and

first grade levels. Many of the forces described above have had an impact on the numbers of youngsters being served in Indiana. While many school systems have experienced this type of decrease in student population such has not been the case in Ross Township School Corporation. The recent census also reflects that many areas of Indiana have lost general population during recent years. By the same token other areas of Indiana have increased in general population. Ross Township School Corporation is located in the middle of one of the fastest growing areas within the State of Indiana. Continued increases in general population have been experienced in spite of a general economic recession, high unemployment, industrial cutbacks, rapidly rising inflation, decreasing birthrates, and growing tax burden. If Ross Township has continued to grow throughout the recent period what will be the nature of future growth if and as economic conditions continue to improve and full employment and production is accomplished?

As has been pointed out by numerous reports, Ross Township is so located as to serve as one of the major crossroads in the midwest. Two major highways and an effective supporting net of traffic arteries provide easy and rapid access to hundreds of thousands of individuals and all the industrial, commercial, service, and recreational operations of an immense metropolitan complex. The availability of thousands of acres of land so close to markets and employment locations has and will continue to attract both residents and industry to the township. During recent years large tracts of land have been platted and converted into large residential developments. More recently a number of apartment complexes have been planned and constructed. It can be expected that more will be built in the years ahead. Thus far a major

portion of the influx of general population has come from the highly industrialized and densely populated areas of communities along the southern shores of Lake Michigan. In many instances persons moving to Ross Township have been part of the "white flight" from communities with heavy black population. There is some feeling that with improved transportation facilities future "white flight" may terminate in areas further south in Indiana than Ross Township. It would seem logical to expect that future decisions made by the courts relative to school integration plans in such areas as Richmond, Virginia, Detroit, Michigan, and Indianapolis will have a significant impact upon the nature of future in-migration of residents into Ross Township.

The influx of commercial, service, and business operations into Ross Township during recent years has been quite extensive. Current plans call for the construction of a large hospital complex, a warehousing complex for a major retail and mail order firm, and a very large shopping center. Such projects as developed will in turn spawn projects both large and small. It would seem logical to expect that within the next ten to twenty years the Ross Township area will be one of the major trade, business, commercial, and service areas in the entire midwest if not in the entire nation. The potentials for such development are present. The realization of potential will depend upon the continued improvement of the general economy and the availability of utility services necessary for continued expansion. It can be envisioned that the main hub of the business, commercial, and industrial development will be along Highway 30 and the intersection with I-65. Residential areas will cover the major portion of the

remaining area west of Interstate 65. Residential areas will also be developed in the general northeast, southeast, and southern portions of the township to the east of I-65.

Community Observations

Understanding the environs of the school is important to understanding the schools themselves inasmuch as schools are an integral and vital part of the institutions and thought which make up community life. Schools serve their communities and represent a blend of the locale's character with educational theories and practices which is evidence of the concept of a local school system at work. Neither people, nor communities, nor schools are static. Just as people constantly work to shape their future, so do communities and school systems work to the same end. What a community does or does not do with what it has to offer in relation to its schools determines the future shape of its educational enterprise. It is extremely important for schools to maintain close communication with the community so that intelligent planning may take place. There is no single agency capable of providing all the answers to questions concerning community growth. Many questions do not have precise answers but must be dealt with in terms of trends, impressions, and intuitive judgments. Some questions can be answered in a factual manner. Combining these various elements enables one to get a perspective whereby trends begin to come into sharp focus.

This section of the report presents summary statements reflecting the expressions of many groups throughout the community. The consultants talked with representatives from several governmental units, the Chamber

of Commerce, real estate developers, utility companies, and telephone companies.

Basically Ross Township is a suburb of the City of Gary. Much of the recent growth in Ross Township and Merrillville is a result of the national trend in recent years when families moved from urban centers to the suburbs. Indications are, however, that growth due to this factor has diminished and that those who wanted to leave Gary have already done so.

Many of the labor force in Gary and surrounding areas are employed by the steel mills in Gary. Steel production, in general, has declined somewhat in recent years. At the same time, production methods have been modernized. Thus a combination of lower production and modernization could result in reduced manpower needs. It is rather evident, therefore, that continued growth of Ross Township must come from new industry, new business enterprises, and commercial developments.

A new complex to be developed by the J. C. Penney Company Incorporated is illustrative of the type of developments which will cause Ross Township and Merrillville to grow. Penney's plan on developing a large shopping warehouse complex with a 1974 target date. Such a development will do much to trigger other commercial and economic enterprises.

Illustrative of other commercial development is the expansion of the Holiday Inn to include more hotel rooms and a convention center. The construction of the second part of the "twin" office towers is planned and thus will make additional space available for offices necessary to support the professional and service aspects of a community.

In the recent past, a number of realtors and construction companies have constructed many homes and apartment units. These vary in size and price from those which are rather modest to those which are quite expensive. Thus, the community is made attractive for people of varying economic means and provides for a true cross section of society. There is much vacant land within Ross Township, some of which has been zoned and platted for future residential developments. It is expected that housing starts for single family units, apartment buildings, and condominiums will continue but at a more modest rate than in the past.

The consultants were impressed with the guarded optimism of those with whom they visited. Naturally, much depends on economic developments at the national level. It would appear that a steady and gradual economic increase is definitely in the future for Ross Township.

Several problems temper the optimism somewhat. Merrillville is unincorporated as a civil unit of government. Steps have been taken to bring about the incorporation. However, this matter is now in the courts pending a decision on the legality of the incorporation proceedings. Incorporation would provide Merrillville with certain options such as the municipal bonding capacity, which are not now available.

With today's emphasis on ecology, such matters as sewage disposal in a rapidly growing area take on added importance. A Conservancy District has been formed and is beginning to have an impact.

In general, modest but steady developments in Ross Township and Merrillville seem to be indicated in the foreseeable future. Much depends on the development of the J. C. Penney complex because this

will trigger a number of related developments. It will tend to broaden the trading area and make Merrillville a hub from as far south as the Kankakee River. The completion of I-65, resurfacing of other major arteries, and the existing network of secondary roads combine to make for easy and quick access within the township and to major trading areas such as Gary, Chicago, and Indianapolis. All elements taken into consideration indicate continued growth.

CHAPTER II

PUPIL ENROLLMENTS AND PROJECTIONS

It is a very difficult task to predict pupil enrollments with a high degree of accuracy over a period of years in a school district such as Ross Township. This is due to the number of uncontrollable variables such as housing developments, the general moves from urban areas, and the general mobility of the population. In this section several slightly different projections of pupil population have been made to serve as the basis for determining general guidelines for future planning. Projections made in fast growing districts are typically too conservative. There is always the temptation to use the more extravagant projections and yet it serves no good purpose if projections are unrealistic in their outcome. The projections used result in a range of predicted pupil enrollments through 1977-78. From such projections can be developed reasonable bench marks to be used for short- and more long-range planning.

While many sections of the State of Indiana have been experiencing decreases in both general and pupil population during recent years, and while the general rate of pupil growth for the entire state has been relatively minor, the growth in pupil population in a significant number of school districts has been quite dramatic. In 1970, the Office of the Indiana State Superintendent of Public Instruction published

a Research Brief of the Enrollment Trends in Indiana School Corporations 1966-1970. Data in the Research Brief indicate that the pupil enrollment in the Ross Township School Corporation increased by 23.39 per cent from 1966 to 1970 and in 1970 was the 32nd largest school corporation in the state. This is an average growth of 5.97 per cent each year.

Data in Table 2.1 present past enrollment figures by grades for the entire school corporation from 1967-68 through 1972-73. It will be noted that the total pupil population increased from a total of 6,364 pupils in kindergarten through grade twelve in 1967 to 7,682 pupils in 1972-73. This is an increase of 1,318 pupils over the five year period. The average yearly growth has been approximately 264 students during this period of time.

Attention is invited to the lower portion of Table 2.1 which concerns data relative to advancement ratios. Advancement ratios indicate that percentage of students in a given grade who, on the average, proceed to the next grade level the following year. For example, in the Ross Township School Corporation 99.03 per cent of all tenth grade students, on the average, have proceeded into the eleventh grade in the following year. In similar fashion, the table shows that, on the average, 101.60 per cent of all first grade students have moved into the second grade the following year and that, on the average, 102.08 per cent of all second grade students moved into the third grade the following year. The advancement ratio percentages in excess of 100 per cent are the result of the in-migration of families with pupils to be served in these respective grades. In rapidly growing school communities, it is not unusual for advancement ratios, especially at

TABLE 2.1

Past Yearly Enrollments By Grades and Total 1967-68 Through 1972-73 Inclusive
With Advancement Ratios

Years	Kg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SpEd	Total
1967-68	597	541	505	522	535	518	474	507	415	500	470	399	346	35	6,364
1968-69	632	522	566	530	566	556	546	504	532	447	504	480	399	37	6,821
1969-70	630	577	529	568	554	570	568	561	510	584	457	491	443	40	7,082
1970-71	574	599	569	532	598	560	582	584	577	547	593	447	489	39	7,289
1971-72	564	558	615	600	563	616	566	628	602	620	543	593	420	25	7,513
1972-73	526	522	563	612	619	569	628	601	627	635	574	531	627	48	7,682
Adv. Ratio	92.69	101.60	102.08	105.38	101.95	102.48	105.15	102.33	107.47	98.99	99.03	98.67			
From Grade	K-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12			

the non-high school grade levels, to be in excess of 100 per cent. An examination of the data in Table 2.1 reveals that eight of the advancement ratios are in excess of 100 per cent. Thus, it can be seen that, during the years under examination, there have been more pupils, on the average, in each grade in each succeeding year with exception only of grades one, ten, eleven, and twelve.

Additional comment regarding the advancement ratios for ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students is warranted. These advancement ratios are generally much higher than are typically found in most school corporations in Indiana. The advancement ratios at the senior high school level indicate one of two things. Either the dropout rate at the high school level is quite atypical or else the number of in-migrating high school students nearly equals the number of high school students who drop out of school. In any event, the high school population remains very stable and the data indicate continued growth at this level in a pattern which differs from the typical Indiana high school.

Table 2.2 contains data indicating actual projection of pupil enrollments in grades one through twelve by grade levels. This type of projection, using advancement ratios, is based on the assumption that the factors influencing pupil population growth in the immediate past will continue at the same rate in the future. If new social or economic forces develop, the projections can be radically upset. In fast growing communities, this type of projection is generally considered to be quite conservative in outlook. It should also be mentioned that an assumption was made regarding first grade enrollments since

TABLE 2.2

Projected Enrollments Grades One Through Twelve
1973-74 Through 1977-78 Using Advancement Ratio Technique

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1972-73	522	563	612	619	569	628	601	627	635	574	531	627	7,108
Adv. Ratios From Grade		101.60 1-2	102.08 2-3	105.38 3-4	101.95 4-5	102.48 5-6	105.15 6-7	102.33 7-8	107.47 8-9	98.99 9-10	99.03 10-11	98.67 11-12	
1973-74	519	530	575	645	631	583	660	615	674	628	568	524	7,152
1974-75	516	527	541	606	658	647	613	675	661	667	622	560	7,293
1975-76	513	524	538	570	618	674	680	627	725	654	660	614	7,397
1976-77	510	521	535	567	581	633	709	696	674	718	648	640	7,432
1977-78	507	518	532	564	578	595	666	726	748	667	711	639	7,451

there is no accurate method of determining the number of students who will enter the first grade in future years. The projection is based on the assumption that first grade enrollments will decrease slightly each succeeding year.

Using the advancement ratio technique, the projection indicates a total growth in the school population during the five year period from 1972-73 through 1977-78 of 343 pupils or an average of 69 pupils per year. It is noted that the average annual increase from 1967 to 1972-73 was approximately 275 pupils per year in grades one through twelve. Therefore, based upon this projection technique, growth would continue but at a lower annual average than in the past five years.

Table 2.3 contains data regarding the average percentage of increase in total enrollment of grades one through twelve on an annual basis. It is significant to note that the numerical increase has gradually decreased with each succeeding year. The highest percentage of increase was in the 1966-67 school year when pupil population in grades one through twelve increased by 8.62 per cent over the preceeding year. The smallest percentage of increase was experienced in the 1972-73 school year when the increase was 2.65 per cent over the 1971-72 school year.

TABLE 2.3

Total Enrollment 1965-66 Through 1972-73, Grades One Through Twelve, Yearly Increases, and Percentages of Increase

Year	Enrollment	Increase	Percentage of Increase
1965-66	4,902		
1966-67	5,325	423	8.62
1967-68	5,732	407	7.64
1968-69	6,152	420	7.32
1969-70	6,412	260	4.22
1970-71	6,676	264	4.11
1971-72	6,924	248	3.71
1972-73	7,108	184	2.65

Table 2.4 contains data regarding the average percentage of increase during the last two, three, four, five, six, and seven year periods. It is interesting to note the trends indicated by the data in Table 2.4. The average percentage of increase has decreased each year from 1966-67 through the current year. Thus, while the student population continues to increase, the increase is at a slower rate each year since 1965.

TABLE 2.4

Average Percentage of Increase
Past Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, and Seven Years

Year	Percentage of Increase	Average
1966-67	8.62	5.47% (7 Years) "A"
1967-68	7.64	4.94% (6 Years) "B"
1968-69	7.32	4.40% (5 Years) "C"
1969-70	4.22	3.67% (4 Years) "D"
1970-71	4.11	3.49% (3 Years) "E"
1971-72	3.71	3.18% (2 Years) "F"
1972-73	2.65	

The six slightly different projections included in Table 2.5 are based on data found in Table 2.3 and 2.4. The data in Table 2.5 relates to the projected total enrollments in grades one through twelve from 1973-74 through 1977-78. The basis for each projection is the average percentage of growth the past two through seven years.

TABLE 2.5

Projections of Total Enrollments Grades One Through Twelve By Average Percentage of Increases 1973-74 Through 1977-78

Year	"A"1966-73 Av.5.47%	"B"1967-73 Av.4.94%	"C"1968-73 Av.4.40%	"D"1969-73 Av.3.67%	"E"1970-73 Av.3.49%	"F"1971-73 Av.3.18%
1972-73	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108
1973-74	7,497	7,459	7,421	7,369	7,356	7,334
1974-75	7,907	7,827	7,747	7,639	7,613	7,567
1975-76	8,339	8,213	8,088	7,919	7,879	7,808
1976-77	8,795	8,618	8,444	8,210	8,154	8,056
1977-78	9,276	9,044	8,815	8,511	8,438	8,312

Table 2.6 has been prepared so that each of the projections can be compared at a glance. The projection determined by the advancement ratio technique appears too conservative in light of the sociological and economic data previously presented. Projections "A", "B", "C", and "D" may prove to be too inflated. This can be explained, in part, because of the rate of growth for three consecutive years starting in 1965. Projection "F" appears to be too conservative in light of the economic and sociological data and since it is based on a two year growth factor, does not take into account any of the previous years.

TABLE 2.6

Summary of Projections of Pupil Enrollments
1973-74 Through 1977-78, Grades One Through Twelve

Year	Adv. Ratio	"A" 5.47%Av.	"B" 4.94%Av.	"C" 4.40%Av.	"D" 3.67%Av.	"E" 3.49%Av.	"F" 3.18%Av.
1972-73	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108
1973-74	7,152	7,497	7,459	7,421	7,369	7,356	7,334
1974-75	7,293	7,907	7,827	7,747	7,639	7,613	7,567
1975-76	7,397	8,339	8,213	8,088	7,919	7,879	7,808
1976-77	7,432	8,795	8,618	8,444	8,210	8,154	8,056
1977-78	7,451	9,276	9,044	8,815	8,511	8,438	8,312

Therefore, it is suggested that Projection "E" be used as an upper limit for planning for the immediate future. The results of this projection are approximately at the mid-point of the extremes of all projections developed. Thus, it is projected that in grades one through twelve, there will be a total of 7,356 pupils enrolled in 1973-74 and that this will increase to 8,438 pupils by the 1977-78 school year. When using projections for planning, it must be kept in mind that projections are intended to serve as a general guide and may vary somewhat from year to year. It is for this reason that an annual update of projections is essential to sound planning. In general then, the projection would indicate, in grades one through twelve, approximately 7,300 pupils in 1973-74 and approximately 8,400 by the 1977-78 school year.

One additional observation must be made at this point. Earlier, it was pointed out that the increase in pupil population is not expected to be uniform throughout each grade level. First grade enrollments have decreased each of the last three years. The first grade enrollment in September, 1972, is exactly the same as it was in September, 1968.

TABLE 2.6

Summary of Projections of Pupil Enrollments
1973-74 Through 1977-78, Grades One Through Twelve

Year	Adv. Ratio	"A" 5.47%Av.	"B" 4.94%Av.	"C" 4.40%Av.	"D" 3.67%Av.	"E" 3.49%Av.	"F" 3.18%Av.
1972-73	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108	7,108
1973-74	7,152	7,497	7,459	7,421	7,369	7,356	7,334
1974-75	7,293	7,907	7,827	7,747	7,639	7,613	7,567
1975-76	7,397	8,339	8,213	8,088	7,919	7,879	7,808
1976-77	7,432	8,795	8,618	8,444	8,210	8,154	8,056
1977-78	7,451	9,276	9,044	8,815	8,511	8,438	8,312

Therefore, it is suggested that Projection "E" be used as an upper limit for planning for the immediate future. The results of this projection are approximately at the mid-point of the extremes of all projections developed. Thus, it is projected that in grades one through twelve, there will be a total of 7,356 pupils enrolled in 1973-74 and that this will increase to 8,438 pupils by the 1977-78 school year. When using projections for planning, it must be kept in mind that projections are intended to serve as a general guide and may vary somewhat from year to year. It is for this reason that an annual update of projections is essential to sound planning. In general then, the projection would indicate, in grades one through twelve, approximately 7,300 pupils in 1973-74 and approximately 8,400 by the 1977-78 school year.

One additional observation must be made at this point. Earlier, it was pointed out that the increase in pupil population is not expected to be uniform throughout each grade level. First grade enrollments have decreased each of the last three years. The first grade enrollment in September, 1972, is exactly the same as it was in September, 1968.

Should such a trend continue, enrollments in the first six grades might increase at a much slower rate than at other grade levels. For example, there were 420 students enrolled in grade twelve in September, 1971, while there are 627 students enrolled in grade twelve in September, 1972, just one year later. It would appear from close examination of the data in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 that the rate of increase in the foreseeable future will be greater at the upper grade levels than at the lower grade levels.

Using the advancement ratios developed in Table 2.1, a projection of population for grades ten through twelve only was developed through the 1981-82 school year. These data are presented in Table 2.7.

TABLE 2.7

Projected Enrollments Grades Ten Through Twelve
1973-74 Through 1981-82 Using Advancement Ratio Technique

Year	10	11	12	Total
1972-73	574	531	627	1,732
Advancement Ratios	98.99	99.03	98.67	
From Grade	9-10	10-11	11-12	
1973-74	628	568	524	1,720
1974-75	667	622	560	1,849
1975-76	654	660	614	1,928
1976-77	718	648	640	2,005
1977-78	667	711	639	2,017
1978-79	747	660	701	2,108
1979-80	772	740	651	2,163
1980-81	726	765	730	2,221
1981-82	682	719	755	2,156

Based on the data in Table 2.7, it can be seen that the enrollment in grades ten through twelve will increase, with one exception, each year through 1980-81 when the affects of the current lower first grade enrollments appear. These data clearly underscore the severity of the problem of accommodating senior high school pupils in the present senior high school facility.

In summary, it would appear that the total pupil population will continue to increase and that much of the increase will be due to inmigration into Ross Township. The data would also suggest that there will be a very slight decrease in enrollments at the lower elementary grades, especially in kindergarten and first grade. Such a trend may be reversed when the effects of social and economic improvements in Ross Township become operative. Finally the data would support the conclusion that the high school student enrollment will grow more rapidly than the elementary grade pupil enrollment.

CHAPTER III

FISCAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROSS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL CORPORATION

Public education has often been described as the most universally appealing and acceptable service provided by government. However, educational services require public funds. The amount expended for public elementary and secondary education in the United States is approaching fifty billion dollars per year. Within Indiana, the total amount spent for such services is in excess of one billion dollars.

Funds to support public education and other public services are derived almost entirely from taxation. Historically, the majority of funds for education has been derived from taxes levied by local boards of education on real and personal property assessments. State sources of revenue, primarily from taxes on income and consumption, have been used to supplement locally produced revenues. A small portion, usually less than seven per cent of all public educational expenditures, has been borne by allocations from the federal government.

It is the purpose of this section of the study to analyze the financial condition of the Ross Township School Corporation in order to gain appropriate insights relative to past efforts to support education and the ability to provide more effectively for educational needs of the future. It is generally understood that Indiana school corporations must depend upon the returns of taxes levied on real

and personal property within the school corporations for the major portion of all financial support. Since 1933 the State of Indiana has assumed some responsibility for financing public education by distributing funds to school corporations according to a distribution formula. While the total amount of state funds appropriated by the General Assembly has increased each year the total cost of education has increased as well. The actual percentage of support for public education to local school corporations has, therefore, varied from year to year. Of recent years an increasingly greater percent of total costs have been financed by means of state funds.

State financial aid is provided to assist local school corporations in meeting operational expenses, teacher salaries, transportation charges, and since 1964, some assistance for capital outlay. As the major burden for providing funds to carry out the educational enterprise is left up to the local district, the task falls squarely on the shoulders of the taxpayers of the district. It is for this reason that a careful evaluation of the financial conditions of the Ross Township School Corporation must be made. Many factors must be considered in analyzing economic conditions of the school corporation. The sections which follow deal with the variables considered to be most pertinent in financing public education.

Local Fiscal Ability

Because the majority of public funds for the operation of elementary and secondary schools is provided by taxes levied on the local property tax base, the fiscal ability of a school district is most commonly gauged by the size of the local tax base per pupil; that is,

the assessed valuation of real and personal property per resident pupil. The assessed valuation of the district is important since it serves as the base which determines how much revenue a given tax rate will produce. In any school corporation it is important that all property be assessed equitably and that the assessment reflect the proper percentage of the true value of the wealth of the district.

Table 3.1 provides information with regard to the history of the local fiscal ability of the Ross Township School Corporation. Column II shows the total assessed valuation for the school district from assessment year 1965, for taxes payable in 1966, through assessment year 1972, for taxes to be paid in 1973. The number of resident pupils in average daily attendance in grades one through twelve is recorded in column III while column IV shows the computed assessed valuation per resident pupil as a measure of local fiscal ability.

TABLE 3.1

Assessed Valuation, Resident Pupils in Average Daily Attendance and Assessed Valuation Per Resident Pupil
Ross Township School Corporation

	Assessed Valuation	Res.Pupils ADA 1-12	Asses.Val.Per Res.ADA 1-12
1965	$28,645,245	4,441	$6,450
1966	30,779,410	4,796	6,417
1967	31,862,895[1)]	5,186	6,144
1968	33,668,100	5,623	5,987
1969	36,029,805	5,975	6,030
1970	42,000,000	6,231	6,742
1971	40,808,895[2)]	6,469	6,308
1972	43,800,000[3)]	6,746	6,492

1) Year in which personal property was removed from assessment
2) Taxable value of automobile removed from assessment rolls
3) Used for developing budget and tax levies for 1973

It will be noted that in the seven year period from 1965 through 1972 the assessed valuation of the school corporation has increased slightly more than two million dollars per year for a total gain of $15,154,755. The total assessment values for real and personal property in the Ross Township School Corporation have consistently shown an increase during the period with one exception. The 1971 decline reflects the removal of automobiles from assessment rolls.

It will also be noted that the number of resident pupils in average daily attendance has increased steadily during the seven year period. Earlier sections of this report have dealt with matters of pupil population projections. All evidence indicates that the pupil population will continue to grow in the years ahead. It is to be expected that the number of resident pupils in ADA will increase in proportion to the general increases experienced.

Special attention is called to column IV. It will be noted that the assessed valuation per resident pupil in average daily attendance has remained remarkably constant over the seven year period. This means that in spite of the very rapid increase in total numbers of pupils served, the assessed valuation has increased by sufficient amounts to maintain a relatively consistent balance between income and numbers of pupils. While the present assessed valuation per resident pupil in ADA is approximately $6,500, the average assessed valuation per resident pupil in the State of Indiana has been computed to be approximately $10,500. Such information leads to the generalization that the Ross Township School Corporation has a wealth per pupil which is substantially below the average of the State of Indiana. The assessed valuation of the school district has, however, increased very rapidly.

It is to be hoped that future commercial, industrial, and business developments within the district will exceed increases in general and pupil population so that the future tax base will be such as to provide greater returns with less effort than at present.

In earlier sections of this survey report considerable information has been provided relative to the potential of the Ross Township School community for future commercial, business, industrial, and residential development. The history of the immediate past, plus present plans and developments, combine to support the conclusion that, barring a major economic and/or social catastrophe, the wealth of the school corporation will increase dramatically. Based on observations from historical data presented in earlier sections of the study a projection of future assessed valuations has been made.

The projection presented through Table 3.2 is based upon the assumption that the variables which have contributed to the past six year history of the district will continue to contribute in much the same fashion into the future. The projection of assessed valuation also gives recognition to the potentials and expectations for general expansion and development in excess of that experienced in the immediate past. It would seem that the projection provided in Table 3.2 should be considered as relatively conservative. The consultants fully expect the commercial, business, service, and residential development of Ross Township and the general area to be realized at a faster rate than is reflected in the projection presented in Table 3.2. As school officials secure accurate and exact figures relative to the assessed valuations for each succeeding year, adjustments of the projection

should be made. By updating the projection periodically realistic estimates of future income and financial potentials can be secured.

TABLE 3.2

Projected Assessed Valuation of the
Ross Township School Corporation 1973 Through 1980 Inclusive

Year	Projected Assessed Valuation
1972*	43,800,000
1973	45,800,000
1974	47,800,000
1975	50,300,000
1976	53,000,000
1977	55,200,000
1978	57,800,000
1979	60,000,000
1980	62,500,000

* Anticipated assessed valuation for 1972 on which taxes will be collected in 1973.

As shown through the projection in Table 3.2, it can be seen that substantial increases in assessed valuation can be expected. Conservative as the projection may be, it shows that the increase within the next few years will be quite substantial and should, in fact, create a situation in which the assessed valuation per resident pupil in ADA will be increased considerably.

Local Fiscal Effort

Some indication of the extent to which the citizenry of the school community has been willing to support education can be shown by analyzing school tax rates levied in the past school purposes. Table 3.3 presents school tax levies for assessment years 1967 through 1973, inclusive. It will be noted that the total tax levy for school purposes

has increased substantially over the years. However, the amounts levied for the General Fund, from which teacher salaries and general operation expenses are paid, has remained relatively stable during the past three years. This condition is the result of state established maximum levies for such purposes. For the past six years the Cumulative Building Fund levy has been $1.25 per $100 of assessed valuation. This is the maximum levy permitted by law. One of the major reasons for the sharp increase in the total tax levied for school purposes has been the tax required to raise funds to retire outstanding general obligation bond payments and to meet yearly lease rental payments on school buildings being financed through either private or public school building corporations. For example, in 1971 a debt service levy in excess of $2.00 was added. As the assessed valuation increases in the years ahead the Debt Service levy can be expected to reduce proportionately provided no new capital outlay indebtedness is assumed.

TABLE 3.3

Ross Township School Corporation Tax Rates*

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973**
General Fund	$4.465	$4.734	$5.967	$4.297	$5.7276	$5.7113	$5.8229
Cumulative Bldg. Fund	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
Debt Service		.106	.37	.67	2.0479	1.6366	2.7444
TOTAL	$5.465	$6.09	$7.587	$6.217	$9.0255	$8.5979	$9.8173

* Tax rates payable in year shown
** Tax rates as established by the County Tax Adjustment Board

It is to be expected that in a school situation with rapidly increasing pupil population ever larger sums of money will be required to finance the educational operation.

Indebtedness of the School District

Officials of the Ross Township School Corporation have done an outstanding job providing physical facilities to serve a very rapidly growing pupil population. In spite of fiscal capacity below the average for school corporations of the state, and a pupil population growth much more rapid than that experienced by most Indiana school districts, a most commendable record has been established. Providing school facilities of quality almost entirely from local fiscal resources demands finite analysis, careful long-range planning, and dedicated fiscal responsibility. The paragraphs and tables which follow are provided to place in perspective the present capital indebtedness of the school corporation and to project the capacity for incurring future debt for capital financing.

Over the years school officials have very carefully made use of several methods available for financing needed capital outlay expenditures. As a result, at the present time there are four general obligation bond issues outstanding against the school district. It has also been necessary to enter into six lease rental arrangements with either public and/or private building corporations. School officials have also received a loan from the Indiana State Veteran's Memorial Fund.

Table 3.4 lists the six school building projects being financed by means of lease rental arrangements with private and/or a public school building corporations. In column I the project or school building

corporation is identified. Column II shows the date on which final payments are scheduled to be made. Column III shows the yearly amount of payments required to meet lease rental obligations.

TABLE 3.4

School Building Projects Financed Through Lease Rental Contracts With Public and/or Private School Building Corporations

Project	Final Payment Date*	Yearly Rental
Ross Township School Building Corporation	1- 1-76	$ 67,000
Iddings Elementary School-Private	6-30-82	56,261
Miller Elementary School-Private	6- 1-81	91,257
Ross Township Junior High School Building Corporation	12-31-90	484,250
Merrillville Senior High School Building Corporation	12-31-90	569,200
Ross Community School Building Corporation	1- 1-89	342,500

* Typically, excess funds are held in escrow and used to retire remaining obligations. Most lease rental programs terminate 1-3 years earlier than shown in the lease.

It must be pointed out that even though the various projects are scheduled to run for a fixed period of time all financial obligations are usually met and the debt retired at a slightly earlier date. As yearly payments are made by the school corporation, funds in excess of that required to meet interest and principal payments as due are

placed in an escrow account. These funds then are invested and earn additional funds over the years. In this way it is usually possible to secure sufficient funds to pay off several of the last payments ahead of time. In this way it is possible to have the actual term of the lease rental reduced by one or more years. While column III shows the total yearly amount of each payment to be made, it must be explained that lease rental payments are made twice each year. Each six months a payment is made. The total of the two payments made in a given year would equal that shown in the right hand column of Table 3.4.

Officials of the Ross Township School Corporation have issued general obligation bonds from time to time to finance various construction projects within the district. At the present time parts of four general obligation bond issues remain outstanding. Tables 3.5 through 3.8 inclusive give information concerning the four remaining general obligation bond issues of the school district. Each table reflects the remaining amount of indebtedness as of October of 1972. In each of the four tables the first column shows the years remaining while the second shows the annual principal payments to be made. Column III shows the annual amount of interest to be paid and column IV shows the total payment including both interest and principal for each given year. The right hand column shows the total amount of remaining indebtedness for each year until retirement. As shown in Table 3.5 the 1972 general obligation bond issue used for an addition to the Wood Elementary School will be retired in 1978. Information relative to the 1971 issue used to finance the junior high school remodeling

project is presented in Table 3.6. The last payment for the issue is scheduled to be paid in 1982. As shown in Table 3.7 the 1965 general obligation bond issue for a high school addition will be paid out in 1986. Table 3.8 shows that the 1967 general obligation bond issue for the Wood Elementary School will not be retired until 1988.

TABLE 3.5

1962 General Obligation Bond Issue -
Wood Elementary School. As of October, 1972

	Annual Principal Payment	Annual Interest	Total Paid	Remaining Indebtedness
1973	$10,000	$1,940.60	$11,940.60	$50,000
1974	10,000	1,603.10	11,603.10	40,000
1975	10,000	1,265.60	11,265.60	30,000
1976	10,000	928.10	10,928.10	20,000
1977	10,000	590.60	10,590.60	10,000
1978	10,000	253.10	10,253.10	-0-

TABLE 3.6

1962 General Obligation Bond Issue -
High School Addition. As of October, 1972

	Annual Principal Payment	Annual Interest	Total Paid	Remaining Indebtedness
1973	$10,000	$4,725.00	$14,725.00	$130,000
1974	10,000	4,387.50	14,387.50	120,000
1975	10,000	4,050.00	14,050.00	110,000
1976	10,000	3,712.50	13,712.50	100,000
1977	10,000	3,375.00	13,375.00	90,000
1978	10,000	3,037.50	13,037.50	80,000
1979	10,000	2,700.00	12,700.00	70,000
1980	10,000	2,362.50	12,362.50	60,000
1981	10,000	2,025.00	12,025.00	50,000
1982	10,000	1,687.50	11,687.50	40,000
1983	10,000	1,350.00	11,350.00	30,000
1984	10,000	1,012.50	11,012.50	20,000
1985	10,000	675.00	10,675.00	10,000
1986	10,000	337.50	10,337.50	-0-

TABLE 3.7

1967 General Obligation Bond Issue -
Wood Elementary School. As of October, 1972

	Annual Principal Payment	Annual Interest	Total Paid	Indebtedness Remaining
1973	$10,000	$7,600	$17,600	$150,000
1974	10,000	7,125	17,125	140,000
1975	10,000	6,650	16,650	130,000
1976	10,000	6,175	16,175	120,000
1977	10,000	5,700	15,700	110,000
1978	10,000	5,225	15,225	100,000
1979	10,000	4,750	14,750	90,000
1980	10,000	4,275	14,275	80,000
1981	10,000	3,800	13,800	70,000
1982	10,000	3,225	13,225	60,000
1983	10,000	2,850	12,850	50,000
1984	10,000	2,375	12,375	40,000
1985	10,000	1,900	11,900	30,000
1986	10,000	1,425	11,425	20,000
1987	10,000	950	10,950	10,000
1988	10,000	475	10,475	-0-

TABLE 3.8

1971 General Obligation Bond Issue -
Junior High School Remodeling. As of October, 1972

	Annual Principal Payment	Annual Interest	Total Paid	Indebtedness Remaining
1973	$35,000	$18,077.50	$53,077.50	$340,000
1974	35,000	16,362.50	51,362.50	305,000
1975	35,000	14,247.50	49,247.50	270,000
1976	35,000	12,532.50	47,532.50	235,000
1977	35,000	10,817.50	45,817.50	200,000
1978	40,000	8,980.00	48,980.00	160,000
1979	40,000	7,000.00	47,000.00	120,000
1980	40,000	5,000.00	45,000.00	80,000
1981	40,000	3,000.00	43,000.00	40,000
1982	40,000	1,000.00	41,000.00	-0-

During recent years school officials have had to plan for the retirement of monies received as a loan from the Indiana State Veteran's Memorial Fund. As of October, 1972, only five more years of payments remain to retire the obligation. While the loan must be repaid yearly payments are not raised locally for payment to state fund officials. Yearly payments are withheld from state support funds due the school corporation through application of the distribution formula. Because the funds are withheld at the state level local school officials must increase the general fund tax levy sufficiently to offset the amount withheld. Since the Ross Township School Corporation has received funds from the Veteran's Memorial Fund it is most unlikely that any future loan from the fund may be secured.

Table 3.9 presents a composite of all the indebtedness, including interest, for capital outlay projects still current within the school district. Yearly payments to retire current indebtedness within the school corporation will be required through 1989. It will be noted the amounts scheduled for payment each year for the various indebtedness obligations have been so developed as to result in slightly decreasing total amounts to be paid each year. School officials must arrange to have on hand as individual payments come due each year, the total amount as shown in the right hand column.

TABLE 3.9

Capital Outlay Project Indebtedness of All Types
With Yearly Payment Required to Meet Obligations -
Principal and Interest Included. As of October 1972

	Veteran's Memorial Loan	Bonded Debt	Lease Rental Obligations	Total Yearly Payments
1973	$17,840	$97,343	$1,610,468	$1,725,651
1974	17,670	94,478	1,610,468	1,722,616
1975	17,500	91,213	1,610,468	1,719,181
1976	17,330	88,348	1,548,558	1,654,236
1977	16,160	85,483	1,543,468	1,645,111
1978		87,495	1,543,468	1,630,963
1979		74,450	1,543,468	1,617,918
1980		71,637	1,543,468	1,615,105
1981		68,825	1,497,839	1,566,664
1982		66,012	1,424,080	1,490,093
1983		24,200	1,395,950	1,420,150
1984		23,387	1,395,950	1,419,337
1985		22,575	1,395,950	1,418,525
1986		21,762	1,395,950	1,417,712
1987		10,950	1,395,950	1,406,900
1988		10,475	1,395,950	1,406,425
1989			811,325	811,325

Since 1963, Indiana school corporations have received sizeable state flat grants per resident pupils in average daily attendance to assist in meeting capital outlay debt responsibilities. The flat grants must first be used to meet capital outlay debt obligations such as general obligation bond and interest payments or lease rental payments. If funds are received in excess of that needed to retire annual debt obligations such may be used for current operation.

At the present time the Average Daily Attendance Flat Grant Distribution has been set at $40 per resident pupil in ADA. As shown in Table 3.10 the Ross Township School Corporation is expected to receive a total of $269,826 from state funds in 1972. This sum amounts to the equivalent of a tax levy of $.66 on the current tax rate payable in 1972. Local

property tax relief is provided through the flat grant distribution. All such funds received are used for debt reduction.

TABLE 3.10

Average Daily Attendance Flat Grant Distribution to the Ross Township School Corporation Anticipated in 1972

Number of Res. Pupils ADA		Amount Flat Grant Per Res. ADA		Total Flat Grant Anticipated
6,746	x	$40.00	=	$269,826

If the Flat Grant distribution continues it can be expected that steady increases in the total amounts received will be realized. Pupil population projections indicate that by 1977-78 there will be some 8,400 students in grades one through twelve. At that time if per pupil allotments remain the same, a total in excess of $314,000 may be received to be applied on debt reduction.

As of October, 1972, a total of $819,000 in bonded debt and Veteran Memorial Fund loan debt remains outstanding against the school corporation. An additional $14,983,383 in principal payments only are scheduled to be made in order to retire the five lease rental contracts currently in effect within the district. By law lease rental contractual arrangements do not result in legal indebtedness against the school district. Such rulings have been given by the courts. To have ruled otherwise would have created a situation in which few if any Indiana school corporations would be able to finance new building construction without violating the two per cent indebtedness limit established through interpretation of the Constitution of the state.

In light of this distinction the actual legal indebtedness of the Ross Township School Corporation is the $819,000 of bonded indebtedness and Veteran's Memorial Fund loan. Such indebtedness is two per cent of the total assessed valuation of the district. If the lease rental obligations outstanding should be added the total, $15,802,383, is equal to 38.72 per cent of the 1971 assessed valuation.

Unencumbered Bonding Capacity

In Indiana, school corporations are limited by law as to the amount of school bonded indebtedness which may be incurred. The present legal limit is an amount equal to two per cent of the assessed valuation of the school corporation. As shown in Table 3.11, the tentative 1972 assessed valuation of the district is $43,800,000. Two per cent of the figure would mean a total bonding capacity of the district of approximately $876,000. Since the outstanding bonded indebtedness will be $735,000 in 1973 the Ross Township School Corporation will have an unencumbered bonding capacity of approximately $141,000. It should be remembered that as the assessed valuation increases in the years ahead the unencumbered bonding capacity of the district will increase proportionately. It must also be remembered that as yearly payments are made and the total amount of bonded indebtedness is reduced, the unencumbered bonding capacity will be increased directly. The full bonding capacity of the school corporation will be restored by 1989. While the total amount of unencumbered bonding capacity available to the school corporation at the present time is not great, it will grow in the immediate years ahead. While a major building project could not be financed by means of general obligation

bonds alone, monies secured through future issues could be used along with cumulative building funds and other types of financing to secure needed school facilities.

TABLE 3.11

Unencumbered General Obligation Bond Capacity
of the Ross Township School Corporation

1972 Assessed Valuation*			Unencumbered Bond Capacity
$43,800,000 x 2 Per cent	=	$876,000	
Outstanding Bonded Debt	=	$735,000	
			= $141,000

* On which taxes are paid in 1973

Status of the Cumulative Building Fund

As discussed in an earlier section of the report, Indiana school officials may establish a Cumulative Building Fund tax levy not to exceed $1.25 per $100 of assessed valuation for up to a twelve year period of time in anticipation of school facility needs. Capital accumulation has the advantage of decreasing the initial impact on the local economy of school facilities by making the year to year tax rates more uniform while at the same time accruing savings by reducing the amount of capital funds for which interest has to be paid. Accordingly, most rapidly growing school districts with constant school facility expansion needs have found it expedient to levy sizable cumulative building fund rates in anticipation of future facility projects. Such funds are invested by school officials until

needed. Investment earnings, added to the funds create a growth factor for the funds which compounds the advantages of the tax levy for accumulation. As indicated earlier in Table 3.2, Ross Township School Corporation officials established a maximum $1.25 levy in 1967 for payment of taxes in 1968. In 1972 it is expected that the sum of approximately $510,000 will be collected for the cumulative building fund.

Table 3.12 has been developed to show the approximate amounts of money which might be realized from a continuation of the maximum cumulative building fund levy as the assessed valuation of the school corporation increases as projected in this study. It will be noted that as the assessed valuation increases the fixed cumulative building fund tax levy will return substantially increased numbers of dollars. School officials are to be commended for establishing the maximum cumulative building fund levy permitted by law. It is generally agreed that in Indiana the most economical method for financing school building construction is by means of a substantial cumulative building fund. Such a method permits the school corporation to finance construction, in part at least, on a pay-as-you-go basis. If accumulated funds are kept invested substantial additional sums can be secured to further increase the amount available for future needed school programs.

TABLE 3.12

Projected Assessed Valuation and Receipts Expected from Maximum Cumulative Building Fund Tax Levy 1973 Through 1980

Collection Year	Assessed Valuation	CBF Levy	Expected Receipts
1973	$43,800,000*	$1.25	$547,500
1974	45,800,000	1.25	572,500
1975	47,800,000	1.25	597,500
1976	50,300,000	1.25	628,750
1977	53,000,000	1.25	662,500
1978	55,200,000	1.25	690,000
1979	57,800,000	1.25	722,500
1980	60,000,000	1.25	750,000
1981	62,500,000	1.25	781,250

* Figure used in developing 1973 budget and tax levies

School records show that on December 31, 1972, there will be on hand in the Cumulative Building Fund a total of $117,326.79. These funds are unencumbered and will be available, along with funds accumulated in future years to finance needed school projects. At this point it is planned that cumulative building funds collected in 1973 and thereafter will be available to finance future needed construction. Reference to Table 3.12 reveals that substantially more than one-half million dollars per year is expected to be added to the Cumulative Building Fund in each of the years ahead. If the projection proves to be accurate, a total of more than 1.75 million dollars will be available for use by 1974.

Other Sources of Capital Outlay Funds

A loan from the Indiana Common School Fund is another source of possible revenue to finance needed future school building projects. A maximum loan of $750,000 may be secured if all qualifying conditions

are met. It is recommended that the requirements for eligibility for a loan from the Common School Fund be discussed with personnel of the Indiana Department of Public Instruction. If the school district should be eligible to secure such a loan for a future building project application should be made. The amount to be borrowed is substantial and the rate of interest assessed has been quite low. School officials would do well to investigate the possibilities for securing a loan from the fund in order to finance any needed new construction projects.

The Indiana General Assembly has also made it possible for school corporations to enter into lease rental agreements with either a local non-profit school building corporation or with private corporations. School officials of the Ross Township School Corporation are quite familiar with both these particular patterns for financing building construction projects. Few school corporations have found it possible to finance major building projects without utilizing in part at least, the services of either a public or a private school building corporation.

Summary

The Ross Township School Corporation is not a wealthy unit in terms of taxable wealth to support the educational enterprise. On the other hand, school officials have done an outstanding job of providing physical facilities of quality for a very rapidly growing student body. Because of the rapid increase in student enrollments it has been necessary for the school district to assume a substantial indebtedness in order to provide physical facilities to house the children and youth of the township.

School officials have wisely established a maximum cumulative building fund tax levy in order to be able to finance new construction and related projects on a cash basis. At the present time, five lease rental contracts with either public or private school building corporations are in force. In addition, four general obligation bond issues are currently being retired as payments come due each year. A Veteran's Memorial Fund loan from the State of Indiana has also been used to finance school construction in the Ross Township School Corporation. Only five more years of payment are needed to retire the loan obligation. The current indebtedness program will be completely retired by 1990 if no additional projects are assumed.

The fiscal situation of the district is, however, not completely bleak. While at present pupil increases and costs related to such growth have increased rapidly, it appears that relief is in sight. It is expected that significant commercial, business, service, and residential developments will be made within the district. It appears that the beginning of a real surge has been realized. As such developments are realized, the assessed valuation of the district will increase. It is expected that the taxable wealth will increase at a faster rate than will the increase in numbers of pupils to be served and inflationary costs for education. School officials have demonstrated that through careful planning and fiscal responsibility, an educational program and facilities of quality can be provided. Continued dedication will insure that future needs will be met in similar fashion.

CHAPTER IV

EXISTING EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The primary purpose of an educational facility is to house an educational program. School programs have many elements: students; purposes; curricula; materials; teachers; administrators; and auxiliary enterprises such as health, food, and transportation services. There is a direct relationship between the extent and quality of educational programs and the adequacy or inadequacy of supporting elements such as the physical facilities. Logically a school corporation should plan the most desirable school program first and then construct the necessary facilities to house it properly. Realistically, however, this possibility does not exist in that existing facilities must be used and adapted to support changes in the educational program. The citizens living in the Ross Township School Corporation as well as the citizens of the entire state have too much invested in even the oldest existing facility to abandon any which are useable and start over.

It is in this context that the physical facilities of the Ross Township School Corporation were examined. Certain widely accepted concepts of what "good" school programs are and similarly accepted school building standards were used to provide a base for an objective review. It is virtually impossible to say with certainty what desirable school programming or school buildings will be ten, twenty, thirty,

or forty years from now. This review was accomplished on the basis of what appears to be developing desirable trends in American education. Both the present and the future have to be considered carefully and the best judgments available applied, to the end that the present generation of children in the Ross Township School Corporation, as well as those yet to come, may be provided with the best opportunities for an adequate education.

Basis for Judging School Plants

As has been pointed out, a school building has one fundamental purpose--that of implementing the effective offering of educational programs and pupil services. It is a teaching tool. School buildings should be attractive, safe, healthful for occupants, comfortable, and convenient. Only then do they provide an environment which supports effective teaching and learning. As school facilities in the corporation were visited, principles essential to judging a school plant in terms of purposes to be served were kept in mind. Some of those principles were:

I. Safety

Obviously, safety is a prime consideration from an educational, moral, and legal point of view. How safe is safe? It is a troublesome question and one without an absolute answer. Nevertheless, standards which relate to making a building more reasonably safe in comparison to others do apply. An attempt was made to answer such questions as:

1. Is the building reasonably fire resistant? If not, has provision been made to insure that there is no possibility of occupants being trapped in an emergency?

2. Is pupil traffic channeled adequately? Are corridors and doorways wide enough? Are there obstacles or hazards such as blind spots, step downs, unlighted stairs, traffic crossings, or doors with unsafe glass? Are ground level exits available from all floors and at ends of corridors? Do classroom doors swing outward?

3. Is the heating system properly isolated from rooms used by students and is it safe?

II. Health

Health, like safety, is a top priority consideration. It is worth considering that both health and safety represent principles the school is expected to teach, and certainly its teaching is likely to be ineffective if it does not provide a safe, healthful setting for instruction. Following are questions for which answers were sought:

1. Are washroom facilities adequate? Are drinking fountains adequate? Fountains in elementary buildings should be such that small children can use them without inconvenience. Toilet facilities should be adapted to the age and size of pupils using them and should be available to small children on the same floor as are regular classrooms.

2. Is the lighting adequate?

3. Are heating and ventilation satisfactory?

III. Space

How much space is adequate for a pupil is always a debatable issue. Standards range from twenty to thirty square feet per pupil within a classroom. Several rules of thumb were applied in making the judgments in the present instance. For example,

a standard of thirty square feet for elementary students was applied. In addition, this report assumed that the number of regular classrooms was an index to the capacity of a school building. The elementary program generally operates in comparatively self-contained regular classrooms though some special facilities for library, art, music, health, and special activities are desirable. The school program is not in balance if such auxiliary facilities either within or in addition to the regular classroom are not available.

IV. Balance of Plant Facilities

A modern school building should be an integrated and balanced unit. Ideally the building should have a heating plant large enough to heat it, but such facilities should not be over-designed. The gymnasium, cafeteria, library, and laboratories must be proportional to the student population and not over-built or vice versa.

The "explosion of knowledge" and the consequent need for school programs to fit young people for life in a world of unprecedented technological complexity requires a school with special supplementary facilities beyond the regular classroom. To expect a school to operate today without adequate library and laboratory facilities is like expecting a farm to be efficient without power tools or planting and harvest equipment. Ideally, a school plant is in balance when it has enough, but not too much of:

1. Regular classroom spaces of adequate size to contain all pupils at whatever pupil-teacher ratio is established as being desirable.

2. Playground, gymnasium, auditorium, and library facilities to serve students in their various study and activities program needs.

3. Corridor, bus loading, and general site space designed and adequate in size so that traffic may be safely maintained without confusion. There should also be enough storage space so that other areas need not be converted to storage use.

4. Facilities to serve health and safety needs such as washrooms, showers, dressing rooms, cafeteria, heating, and ventilating equipment.

In general, the larger the enrollment the greater will be the demand for facilities beyond regular classrooms. A multipurpose room may be satisfactory in one school, whereas in another it may become a bone of contention among competing groups that want to use it at the same time. The concept of a balanced plant is easily understood. The exact point of balance is, however, difficult to define. Symptoms of a school building being out of balance appear when housekeeping gets shabby as a result of toilet facilities being overcrowded and overused; students utilizing corridor space for study or when the library, corridor, or gymnasium must be used for storage of books or equipment. Sometimes those things are nothing but poor housekeeping. Sometimes, however, with even a little overcrowding or imbalance in facilities, poor housekeeping is generated. High maintenance costs are an inevitable consequence of poor housekeeping.

V. Flexibility

A school building is not built to meet present needs alone. If the average life of a building is approximately fifty years, then a considerable amount of looking into the future is necessary

in planning new construction. What may be quite adequate as a regular classroom now may be something less than adequate three or four decades hence. Therefore, in any consideration of buildings either presently available or anticipated, some emphasis and study should be given to ways and means of modifying and adapting school buildings to keep them functional as educational needs change. Flexibility is essential within school buildings. If educational spaces can be rearranged or remodeled to serve new purposes as needed, the life of a building can be substantially increased. The questions which arise from the need for flexibility cannot be ignored. Such things as population shifts, changes in program, and the future financial status of the district necessitate a conscientious effort to provide for tomorrow as well as today.

Descriptions of the School Plants of the Ross Township School Corporation

The following descriptions of the buildings of the Ross Township School Corporation are not intended to be exhaustive in nature. Rather, they are general sketches based upon more comprehensive notes made during inspections of the buildings and from data furnished by the administrative staff of the school corporation. The purpose here is to highlight the major features and characteristics of each building without going into minute detail. An attempt is made to point out both the outstanding qualities as well as shortcomings of each building when measured against the foregoing criteria.

Merrillville Senior High School

The Merrillville Senior High School facility is located on a thirty acre site. The first portion of the facility, opened in 1955, contains twenty-four general purpose classrooms. These rooms are rectangular in shape, with walls of cinder block and windows along one wall. Fluorescent lighting fixtures furnish artificial light. Generally, these rooms are typical in every respect of general purpose classrooms everywhere and with continued maintenance, can serve for many years to come.

In 1957 a gymnasium and locker rooms, art room and several storage rooms were added to the basic unit. Added to the complex in 1958 was a shop area and lecture room. Facilities are provided for work in electricity, wood, auto, and machines.

The first floor of the "East Wing" of the building was added in 1966. These rooms were basically for business education and a language arts center. The second floor of the "East Wing" was completed in 1968 and currently houses the science laboratories and classrooms.

In 1971 and 1972 the final three additions were completed. A new library, audio-visual department, food service area, boiler room, and student commons was in the first phase of this addition. Phase two comprised boys, girls, and varsity locker rooms, a gymnasium, and swimming pool with attendant locker facilities. The final phase of the 1971-72 addition is the auditorium, stage, storage areas, space for the vocal music department, and the lobby area for the auditorium.

Obviously in a building having rooms which have been in use for nearly twenty years, the state of maintenance and useability vary

widely. Some of the older portions of the building need painting, a general cleaning, and attention given to windows and drapes.

With the addition of classrooms and the subsequent increase in the number of students enrolled in the facility, the site and outdoor activity areas took a different complexion than when the first unit was opened in 1955. It is indeed a fortunate situation that the site is adequate to accommodate necessary adaptations without purchasing additional land. There is need for further development of the outdoor physical education area. The relocation of tennis courts, development of a baseball diamond, and an all weather track are all matters requiring consideration.

In general, the academic and student service areas inside the facility are suitable and adequate with one exception. The shop areas are still congested and overcrowded. An addition could be accomplished to house two or three additional shops.

It is difficult to compute precise pupil capacity for such a large, complex facility. Best judgment, however, would indicate that the maximum enrollment in this facility should be approximately 1,800 students.

Harrison Junior High School

The Harrison Junior High School facility was dedicated in 1971 and placed in educational service at the start of the 1971-72 academic year. The facility is an outstanding example of a contemporary building containing the latest and finest equipment to support a junior high school educational program. The building, located on a forty acre site, is of brick motif continued inside the building on both first

and second floors. Featured in the instructional areas are twenty-six classrooms, science laboratories, large group lecture areas, seminar rooms, home economics and shop areas, music rooms, and a physical education area. In support of these instructional areas, space is provided for such non-instructional services as administration, health, food, and departmental offices.

The design capacity of the building is 1,200 students. However, the district's entire junior high school population of 1,860 pupils is now in attendance due to the removal from service of the Merrillville Junior High School for complete remodeling. Upon completion of the remodeling project it is anticipated that the junior high school student population will be divided between the two junior high schools.

Merrillville Junior High School

The Merrillville Junior High School is currently being totally and completely remodeled. When completed the school will contain two one story sections and one two story section to accommodate approximately 1,000 students.

In every respect, the remodeling is being accomplished so that the facility will support a total junior high school educational program equivalent to that found in the new Harrison Junior High School. Attention is being given to the outdoor educational areas as well, so that the project will result in a total and complete educational plant.

Henry P. Fieler Elementary School

The Henry P. Fieler Elementary School facility is located on a ten acre site and is a U shaped building. The first unit consisting of twelve classrooms, a nurse's room, and a multi-purpose room

was completed in 1958. In 1960 six classrooms were added and in 1963 six more classrooms and a library were completed. The classrooms are all rectangular rooms with those for lower grades self-contained with restroom facilities. There are twenty classrooms, two kindergarten rooms, one room for art and one room for music. Two rooms house the elementary special education program thus, leaving space available for 480 students and 120 kindergarten students.

Maintenance on this building is good. The art room does not have water. In spite of this, the art program has accomplished mural paintings on the walls in hallways which add much to the decor of the building.

Homer Iddings School

The Homer Iddings School is located on a twenty-five acre site and consists of thirty-six basic classrooms, four kindergarten rooms, one art room, one music room, a multi-purpose room, and a library. The first unit was completed in 1964, with additions in 1970 and 1971. The thirty-six basic classrooms can house 1,080 students with the kindergarten facilities accommodating an additional 240 students.

The classrooms, generally located on either side of the corridors, are rectangular in shape with the rooms for students in lower grades equipped with restrooms. The building is generally well maintained but does have some shortcomings. Room restrooms do not have ventilating fans, several rooms could use more chalkboard area, and hallways have a tendency to become noisy due to lack of acoustical tile in the ceiling. A drainage problem exists in the play area to the rear of the building. Matters such as these can be corrected and do not detract from the educational usefulness of the building.

Edgar L. Miller Elementary School

The Edgar L. Miller Elementary School was opened in 1966 and is situated on a seventeen acre site. The facility contains twenty-one general classrooms, two kindergarten rooms, an art room, a music room, a library, and a multi-purpose room. The building, being relatively new, shows no evidence of deterioration and is well maintained. The twenty-one classrooms can house 630 students, and the kindergarten rooms have a capacity of 120 students. The building is L shaped with rooms located on either side of the hallways. As with other buildings in the district, the rooms for lower grades are totally self-contained.

Jonas Salk Elementary School

The Jonas Salk Elementary School is located on a fifteen acre site. The original portion was constructed in 1961 with additions in 1963, 1967, and 1969. There are thirty general classrooms, three kindergarten rooms, one room each for art and music, a multi-purpose room, and a library. The general classrooms can accommodate 900 pupils with the kindergarten capable of housing an additional 180 students.

There is a need for additional lighting in the gymnasium and the exterior roof facing needs repainting. Otherwise, the general condition of the facility is satisfactory.

John Wood Elementary School

The John Wood Elementary School, located on an eighteen acre site, can accommodate 540 students in eighteen basic classrooms, and an additional 120 students in two kindergarten rooms. In addition to these classrooms, there is a library, a multi-purpose room, and an art room

in the facility. The original portion of the structure was opened in 1962 with additions completed in 1963 and 1968.

Additional Sites

The school corporation owns three sites for future use. South of US 30 on 97th Street, Crown Point is a site of 14.125 acres. There is a ten acre site on Indiana 330 West. The third site is twenty-five acres north of Harrison Junior High School.

Statistical Summary

Tables 4.1 through 4.4 have been developed to summarize statistical data regarding the facilities and to give an overview of the physical properties of the school corporation. Table 4.1 contains data relative to all buildings in the corporation and includes grade levels, age of the facility, pupil capacity, and enrollments as of September, 1972.

TABLE 4.1

Statistical Data
Educational Facilities
Ross Township School Corporation

School	Grades	Construction Dates	Capacity	Enrollment September 1972
Merrillville Sr. High	10-12	1957, 1958, 1966, 1968, 1971, 1972	1,800	1,732 (10-12) 11 (Sp.Ed.)
Harrison Jr. High	7-9	1971	1,300	1,863 (7-9) 11 (Sp.Ed.)
Merrillville Jr. High	-	1929, 1943, 1951,1964,1967 1972	1,000	0 0
Fieler Elementary	K-6	1958, 1960 1963	480 (1-6) 120 (Kg) 30 (Sp.Ed.)	498 (1-6) 69 (Kg) 26 (Sp.Ed.)
Iddings Elementary	K-6	1964, 1970, 1971	1,080 (1-6) 240 (Kg)	951 (1-6) 148 (Kg)
Miller Elementary	K-6	1966	630 (1-6) 120 (Kg)	658 (1-6) 107 (Kg)
Salk Elementary	K-6	1961, 1963, 1967, 1969	900 (1-6) 180 (Kg)	918 (1-6) 134 (Kg)
Wood Elementary	K-6	1962, 1963 1968	540 (1-6) 120 (Kg)	488 (1-6) 68 (Kg)

Table 4.2 contains only data for kindergarten facilities and enrollments. Using existing spaces, approximately eight additional kindergarten sections could have been accommodated in September, 1972. It is to be noted, however, that the available pupil stations are not evenly distributed throughout all buildings. The problem then becomes one of having pupils where available spaces are which may not necessarily be the school facility nearest a given student's home.

TABLE 4.2

Pupil Capacity, Enrollments, and Available Capacity
Kindergarten, Ross Township School Corporation

Building	Capacity	Enrollment September 1972	Avail. Capacity September 1972
Fieler	120	69	51
Iddings	240	148	92
Miller	120	107	13
Salk	180	134	46
Wood	120	68	52
TOTAL	780	526	254

Table 4.3 contains similar data regarding grades one through six in all buildings. At the opening of the school year in September, 1972, there were 117 pupil stations available in all grades one through six in all buildings. This is approximately the equivalent of four classrooms. It must be kept in mind that these available pupil stations are not evenly distributed throughout all grades and all buildings. Fieler, Miller, and Salk schools are each over capacity while Iddings and Wood had available pupil stations when school opened in September, 1972.

TABLE 4.3

Pupil Capacity, Enrollments, and Available
Capacity, Grades 1-6. Ross Township School Corporation

Building	Capacity	Enrollments September 1972	Available Capacity September 1972
Fieler	480	498	- 18
Iddings	1,080	951	129
Miller	630	658	- 28
Salk	900	918	- 18
Wood	540	488	52
TOTAL.	3,630	3,513	117

Table 4.4 contains data relative to the enrollment and capacity for students in grades seven through nine. As mentioned earlier in this section, the Merrillville Junior High School facility is being completely renovated and has been removed from service until such time as the renovation is completed. All students in grades seven through nine now attend Harrison Junior High School placing this facility about 560 students over capacity. However, upon completion of the renovation project, there will be 2,300 pupil stations available for these grades and the total enrollment will be divided between the two junior high schools. The total capacity should accommodate the total number of students enrolled in grades seven through nine for a number of years to come.

TABLE 4.4

Pupil Capacity, Enrollment and Available Capacity, Grades 7-9, Ross Township School Corporation

Building	Capacity	Enrollment September 1972	Available Capacity September 1972
Harrison	1,300	1,863	-563
Merrillville Junior	1,000[1]	0[1]	0[1]
TOTAL	1,300	1,863	-563

[1] Building removed from service during complete renovation. Capacity is anticipated capacity upon completion of project.

Table 4.5 contains data for Merrillville Senior High School capacity and enrollment. In September, 1972, there were 68 pupil stations available. Thus, there is very little space available to accommodate additional pupils in grades ten through twelve, and it is not evenly distributed in all academic disciplines.

TABLE 4.5

Pupil Capacity, Enrollment and Available Capacity, Grades 10-12, Ross Township School Corporation

Building	Capacity	Enrollment September 1972	Available Capacity September 1972
Merrillville Senior High	1,800	1,732	68
TOTAL	1,800	1,732	68

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultant team has made a thorough study of the situational factors prevailing in the Ross Township School Corporation. Much of the pertinent information has been presented in the preceding sections of this report. Attention has been called to the sociological and economic changes that have taken place in recent years. The data gathered through interviews with persons from business and industry support other statistical data and results in the conclusion that Ross Township will continue to grow economically in the foreseeable future. Commercial development includes new housing units from single dwelling units to large apartment and condominium complexes. Transportation north and south, and east and west is excellent providing ready access to Chicago, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and to eastern Illinois and beyond. The economic future of Ross Township, barring a complete national economic collapse, appears to be excellent.

Accompanying the economic and sociological growth is a continued growth of pupil population in the Ross Township School Corporation. The rate of growth has decreased each year in recent years, and probably will continue to do so. Thus, the total pupil population will increase but at a much slower rate than in previous years. In addition, it is anticipated that the growth will not be uniform at all grade levels.

The lower elementary grades may remain virtually unchanged while a more rapid rate of increase may be noted at the high school level.

In arriving at a series of recommendations to be considered by the Board of School Trustees and the administration in planning for the future, careful consideration has been given to the projected numbers of pupils to be served, the availability and educational usefulness of facilities currently in use, the financial capacity of the district, and possible strengthening of educational programs and services which might result from alternative courses of action. The consultant team has given in-depth consideration to a variety of possible ways in which the students of the Ross Township School Corporation might be served to insure maximum educational benefits in keeping with sound fiscal management. After careful evaluation of each possible alternative, the consultant team has developed a course of action to be recommended. While the proposed plan is not completely satisfactory in all respects, it appears to be a logical and financially feasible program. In the considered judgment of the consultant team the proposal is educationally sound and will permit significant broadening and enriching of educational programs and services for children and youth at all levels within the school corporation. The proposed plan incorporates a sound educational base upon which future long-range building programs can be built efficiently and effectively.

Recommendations for Organization, Building Utilization, and New Construction

Those who have studied the educational situation which prevails in the Ross Township School Corporation are well aware that some

additional educational facilities will be needed in the immediate future. It is also recognized that permanent type educational facilities can hardly be made available for use within a period of weeks or months. It is not too early for school officials to take the necessary action to insure that needed educational facilities are available for use at the proper time. The recommendations included herein are divided into three time periods. The first time period includes the period from the present through the close of the 1974-75 school year. The second time period includes the period from September, 1975, to approximately the end of the 1977-78 school year. The third time period includes the indefinite period of time after 1978.

A. The Immediate Future 1972-1975

During this period of time it is recommended that the Ross Township School Corporation continue to function on the same organizational base as at present. Thus, the elementary schools would continue to be organized on a kindergarten through grade six base, the junior high schools would continue to house grades seven through nine, and the senior high school would be composed of grades ten, eleven, and twelve.

1. Elementary School Education (K-6)

Presently there is space for approximately eight more sections of kindergarten pupils and for four sections of elementary pupils in grades one through six. If the slower rate of increase in elementary school pupils continues it would seem that space will be available to house the anticipated enrollment during this time period.

2. Junior High School Education (7-9)

With the anticipated reopening of the remodeled and renovated Merrillville Junior High School in September of 1973, the junior high school pupil population can very adequately be accommodated in the two junior high school facilities.

3. Senior High School Education (10-12)

As pointed out elsewhere in this report, the senior high school is virtually operating at capacity in spite of recently completed additions of such outstanding facilities as the new auditorium, swimming pool, library, and cafeteria. Shop areas and out-of-door facilities are particularly critical at this point in time. These factors when combined with the anticipated enrollments create a problem demanding immediate attention.

It is recommended that a thorough study be made of the existing facility in light of the educational program to be offered so that a determination can be made regarding the exact nature of future additions. In the judgment of the consultants, the capacity of the high school should be increased so that it can ultimately accommodate approximately 2,400 students. Such a change will require, for example, additional general academic areas; spaces for shops; work, storage and classroom areas for both art and home economics. The existing building should be studied to determine how the needed additional areas might be secured. It might be possible to remodel some of the present art, shop, home economic areas and the old auditorium so as to secure needed additional academic teaching stations. It might

be feasible to construct an addition to the present shop area or perhaps it would be best to build a separate special facilities building that would include space for art and industrial arts instruction and anything else of a special nature needed to serve a student body of 2,400 pupils.

4. Additional Considerations

During this period of time, it is recommended that the 14.125 acre site on 97th Street, Crown Point, be sold back to the developer, or sold outright should the developer not exercise his option to purchase. The income realized from the sale could be used to purchase a different elementary school site, or it could be used to partially finance the recommended high school additions.

It is further recommended that the Board of School Trustees give consideration to securing an option to purchase land north of 93rd Street for a future elementary school. Planning for the proposed elementary school should commence immediately although construction is not anticipated until the second time period of this report (1975-1978).

B. The Intermediate Time Period 1975-1978

It is recommended that the Board of School Trustees and the school staff give consideration to starting construction of a new elementary school so that it will be ready for occupancy no later than September of 1978. At this time, it would appear that the school should be located north of 93rd Street.

As has been pointed out earlier, it is very difficult to be precise about elementary school enrollment projections. If, during the

construction of the proposed elementary school, enrollments at the elementary level exceed the capacity of the buildings, it would be possible to house all or part of the sixth grade students of the district in one of the junior high schools temporarily. The rated capacity of the two junior high schools will be 2,300 pupils. However, as mentioned earlier, it is the opinion of the consultant team that the two junior high schools can accommodate approximately 2,800 pupils without overcrowding. The projected enrollment in grades seven, eight, and nine reaches approximately 2,200 students by 1978, while the maximum sixth grade enrollment during the time period is projected to be approximately 675 pupils. Thus, at least a large portion, if not all the sixth grade pupils of the district could be temporarily housed should the necessity arise until the proposed elementary school is ready for occupancy.

C. The Post 1978 Period

It is difficult to see clearly beyond 1978. However, every indication leads to the conclusion that a second high school, or a school within a school for high school students will be needed. During the years between now and 1978, study should be given, in light of future events, regarding the solution of the problem of housing high school youth.

When the second high school is needed consideration might well be given to creating two senior high schools serving all students in grades nine through twelve inclusive. If such an organizational arrangement were effected middle schools for pupils in six through eight inclusive could be set up in the two plants currently planned to serve

as junior high schools. By removing the sixth graders from all the elementary schools the pupil capacity of each plant would be increased significantly. By housing pupils in kindergarten through grade five inclusive in the elementary plants the need for constructing additional elementary facilities could be postponed for a period of time.

A Recommended Plan for Financing Needed Educational Facilities

It has been recommended that officials of the Ross Township School Corporation take immediate steps to plan and construct a major addition to the senior high school plant. It has been suggested that the total pupil capacity of the complex be enlarged to serve approximately 2,400 pupils in grades ten through twelve, inclusive. To accomplish this goal may require renovation and remodeling of facilities currently used for art, home economics, small auditorium, and shop into more general purpose academic classroom areas. It will also be necessary to construct either a free standing building or a major addition to the present plant to house the new and expanded industrial arts, art, and other specialized instructional and laboratory areas so badly needed to serve the anticipated student body. As has been pointed out, the immediate need for additional educational facilities is at the senior high school level.

Even though immediate attention should be directed to meeting senior high school educational needs, school officials must recognize that additional elementary school facilities will be needed in the future. It has been suggested that by 1978 a new elementary school be provided. It is most difficult to identify additional educational facility needs

beyond 1978; however, depending upon the rate of growth, it seems safe to predict that the day will come when a second senior high school will be needed and still additional elementary facilities required. The financing plan provided in this section has been developed in the full realization that there will be additional financial demands for capital outlay expenditures in the years ahead. However, past financial planning and the growth potential of the district, if such develops as anticipated, will combine to provide the financial base to support additional educational facility expenditures as needed in the future. If the commercial, industrial, and service development takes place within the school corporation as anticipated, financing of future capital outlay projects will probably be far easier to secure than at the present moment.

Any plan for financing educational facilities at this time, must be done in light of the existing pattern established by the General Assembly and the various administrative agencies involved. Even though state financing patterns may be changed in the future to provide school officials at the local level with additional funds to defray the expense of constructing new school buildings, such eventualities cannot be incorporated in any plan of action. Until such changes as are needed are actually incorporated into law, present financing patterns must be followed. School officials are well aware of the various ways by which monies may be secured to finance new school construction. During the recent past it has been necessary for almost every possible source of school construction revenue to be utilized to provide facilities within the school corporation. Throughout this survey report, and

particularly in Chapter III, the various potentials of the school district have been explored. By way of summary it will be remembered that the following are the usual sources used for financing needed school building construction:

1. Yearly returns from an established cumulative building fund tax levy.
2. The issuing of general obligation bonds against the taxable wealth of the school corporation.
3. Loans from the State of Indiana Common School Fund and/or the Veteran's Memorial Fund.
4. Lease rental arrangements with a local non-profit school building corporation.
5. Lease rental arrangements with a private commercial school building corporation.
6. Gifts.

The development of a financial plan for implementing a school building construction program presents difficult problems. Since possible renovation and remodeling may also be involved the problem is further complicated. The financial resources of the school community, while relatively substantial, are not unlimited. It is also well recognized that the cost of new building construction has increased very rapidly during recent years. Current evidence does not indicate that school building costs will be reduced in the years ahead. While it would be easier to support additional school building construction some five or six years later, the press of increased enrollments, particularly at the senior high school level, necessitates that action be taken immediately. School officials are to be commended for having provided high quality school buildings at the elementary and junior

high school levels. The remodeling and additions needed at the senior high school, if carefully planned, will provide the necessary specialized facilities essential to insuring that students at all levels have educational facilities which will support and implement educational programs of high quality.

It is extremely difficult to estimate what new educational facilities might cost. It is even more difficult to make estimates concerning the cost of remodeling older facilities. There are so many different factors which influence the total final costs of construction projects that it is not at all realistic to attempt to put a dollar figure on a proposed construction project prior to completion of detailed planning. The usual measures for estimating school construction costs cannot be used with great confidence at the present time. For that reason, the consultants have not attempted to establish an absolute cost figure for the recommended major addition and remodeling of the senior high school. In the remaining portion of this report, no reference will be made to construction costs for the recommended senior high school program per se. Illustrations will be given, however, which will describe the extent of additional tax effort which might be required to finance capital outlay indebtedness programs of varying amounts. The emphasis will be on helping the reader to understand the amount of additional effort which might be required to finance total programs rather than to suggest a specific cost figure. No one should imply that the consultants are suggesting that the proposed construction program will cost precisely or approximately the amounts used in the various illustrations.

As of December 31, 1972, it is expected that a sum in excess of $117,000 will be in the cumulative building fund of the school district. It is expected that the $1.25 CBF tax levy will return approximately $547,500 in 1973, an additional amount in excess of $572,000 in 1974, and almost $600,000 in 1975. The reader is invited to refer to Table 3.12 in the survey report. Table 3.12 presents information concerning the returns expected from the projected assessed valuation of the school corporation in the years ahead. It will be remembered that, in the judgment of the consultants, the projections as presented are rather conservative. If the assessed valuation of the district increases more rapidly than has been projected the yearly return from a $1.25 cumulative building fund tax levy will be increased proportionately.

It has been recommended that the senior high school remodeling and addition be completed and available for use no later than September of 1975. This would mean that the cumulative building funds on hand at the close of the 1972 year, when combined with cumulative building fund receipts of the next three years would create a total in excess of $1,834,000, plus interest earned, which could be used in 1975 to pay cash for needed construction or remodeling. School administrators have indicated that at this point in time there are no planned projects which would utilize cumulative building fund monies secured during the next three year period. Barring an emergency of some kind, therefore, it would appear that school officials would have a sum in excess of $1,834,000 available to finance in part the needed remodeling and additions to the senior high school to bring the total student capacity of the plant up to a maximum of 2,400 students.

In 1975, if the assessed valuation of the school district increases as projected, the Ross Township School Corporation will have an unencumbered bonding capacity of approximately $400,000. If necessary, school officials could combine the $400,000 available through general obligation bonds available in 1975 to the more than $1,800,000 available through the cumulative building fund at the same time to provide a total of approximately 2.25 million dollars. When the scope and cost of the necessary remodeling and new construction program has been more precisely identified it may be desirable not to utilize the general obligation bond power of the district at this time. As the years go by, the total amount of debt remaining from past capital outlay projects will be reduced and as the assessed valuation of the district increases, the total bond limit available at any one time will increase. In view of the fact that new elementary facilities will undoubtedly be needed in the relatively near future, it would be completely defensible to let the unencumbered bonding capacity of the school corporation continue to increase until such time as it may be adequate to finance a needed project.

In Chapter III it was pointed out that the school corporation has had a loan from the Veteran's Memorial Fund. It was suggested that school officials might investigate the possibility of securing a maximum loan from the Common School Fund. If the district can meet the requirements, a maximum of $750,000 at 3-3/8% interest might be available. This amount, particularly in light of the low interest rate involved, would be a most welcome source of funds with which to finance part of the recommended construction program.

School officials and patrons of the community have a full understanding of the use of lease rental contracts with both the public and private school building corporations as methods for securing needed school building construction projects. Both types of lease rental arrangements have been used to finance past capital outlay construction projects within the district. It would seem that if the cost of the recommended senior high school program is in excess of that which could be financed by combining accumulated funds, general obligation bonds, and perhaps a loan from the Common School Fund, it would again be necessary to utilize a lease rental contract arrangement with either a private or public school building corporation.

As was shown in Chapter III, the Ross Township School Corporation has incurred a number of long-term indebtedness obligations as a result of school building projects completed within the past few years. Semi-annual indebtedness payments have been computed and provision must be made to meet payments as they come due. At the present time school officials are dedicating the complete returns from the Flat Grant Distribution from state funds on the basis of resident pupils in average daily attendance to the retirement of current debt as required by law. In addition, it has been necessary to establish a Debt Service Tax levy in order to secure the additional necessary funds to meet remaining semi-annual indebtedness payments as they come due. It is assumed that school officials will continue to dedicate revenues from these two sources to retire past indebtedness obligations. It must be remembered that as the assessed valuation of the school district increases and as the number of resident pupils in average daily attendance increases, the returns from both the established tax levy

and the state flat grant distribution will increase. In this way, the taxpayers of the district will realize continuing decreases and relief in terms of tax efforts necessary to meet indebtedness obligations in future years. In the remaining section of this report attention is directed to the additional effort which may be necessary to finance needed new capital outlay expenditure programs of varying amounts.

In the illustrations which follow, all computations have been made on the basis of the projected 1975 assessed valuation. Five different illustrations have been provided in order to give sufficient background to show the amount of additional tax effort which might be required to meet new indebtedness obligations of varying amounts.

Example A. If the recommended high school project should require an expenditure of $2,250,000 or less, it could probably be financed by using the accumulated funds on hand and the returns from the $1.25 Cumulative Building Fund tax to be collected during the next three year period and by means of a maximum general obligation bond issue of approximately $400,000. If the proceeds expected from the established $1.25 Cumulative Building Fund Tax levy through 1975 can be combined with the amount in the fund as of December 31, 1972, a total in excess of $1,800,000 will be available. If the money accumulated is invested over the next three year period, a substantial amount of interest could also be earned to add to the amount. By issuing the maximum in general obligation bonds against the anticipated assessed valuation of the district for 1975, a total of approximately $2,250,000 could be available. If the $400,000 general obligation bond issue were to be retired over a four year period it would require an additional

tax levy of approximately $.24 to meet first year indebtedness payments. Succeeding years would be proportionately less..

Example B. If a total construction project amounting to approximately $3,000,000 were developed the Cumulative Building Fund money collected through 1975 of 1.8 million dollars plus earned interest, might be combined with a bond issue of approximately $400,000 and a $750,000 loan from the Common School Fund. If this particular package could be put together, a four year general obligation bond issue would still initially require a tax effort of approximately $.24 with slightly reduced rates thereafter. Loans from the Common School Fund are repaid by means of withholding at the state level of general distribution monies to the school corporation. The withholding is done over a period of twenty years. Local school corporations must levy a tax sufficient to raise from local property tax sources the funds withheld at the state level. If even payments were made over the twenty year term an initial tax levy of approximately $.11 would be required to provide necessary funds for retiring the common school fund debt.

Example C. If a $3,000,000 indebtedness program should be required and a loan from the Common School Fund cannot be secured, it would be necessary for the school officials to supplement the $1.8 million of Cumulative Building Fund money with a lease rental contract with either a private or a public school building corporation. All illustrations regarding lease rental contracts are computed on the basis of a 7% rate of interest and a term of twenty years. Slightly lower yearly payments could be realized if the term of the agreement were lengthened to

twenty-five or more years. Slightly larger payments would result from a contract term of less than twenty years. Proportional changes in yearly payments would also result from a rate of interest higher or lower than that used in the illustrations. All computations have been made on the basis of the 1975 projected assessed valuation figures. If and as the assessed valuation increases, the amount of tax necessary to raise a given sum will be reduced proportionately. If it should be necessary to enter into a lease rental contract for a sum equalling $1.2 million, yearly payments over the twenty year term would be approximately $116,000. With the projected 1975 assessed valuation as a base, it would require a tax of approximately $.23 to raise sufficient funds to meet the yearly lease rental indebtedness obligation.

Example D. If school officials should be faced with a $4,000,000 project, a sum slightly in excess of $1.8 million could be made available through the cumulative building fund. It would be necessary to enter into a lease rental contract for an additional $2.2 million. Over a twenty year term, with an interest rate of seven per cent, the yearly payments required would be approximately $212,000. A tax levy of approximately $.42 on the projected 1975 assessed valuation would be required to raise the funds needed to meet initial yearly repayment installments.

Example E. If a $5,000,000 project were needed, an initial $1.8 million sum would be provided through the cumulative building fund collections through 1975. The lease rental contract then would need

to be for some $3.2 million. Yearly payments on such a lease rental contract would amount to approximately $310,000 per year. This would mean an additional tax levy of approximately $.61, based upon the 1975 projected assessed valuation, to provide sufficient funds to meet the initial yearly payment on the incurred indebtedness.

It is recommended that school officials continue to maintain the full $1.25 cumulative building fund tax levy into the foreseeable future. Additional funds will be necessary to purchase sites and to help finance future school building projects. It is to be hoped that the assessed valuation of the school district will increase more rapidly than is being projected. The recommended program of action presented by the consultant team can be implemented by means of a surprisingly small amount of additional tax effort. Small as the additional tax effort might be, however, any increase can become more weighted when added to the effort already being expended to meet past capital outlay indebtedness payments.

The recommendations made as part of this study will provide a total setting within which quality educational programs can be made available to all the youth of the school corporation for years to come. The financing picture is enhanced considerably in light of the anticipated commercial, industrial, business, and service developments predicted to take place within the Ross Township School Corporation. It would seem that if the intense demands of the immediate present can be met, and sufficient funds can be secured to survive the next two or three year period, considerable relief will follow. Careful attention will need to be given to such factors as the yearly rate of growth of the

school population, the extent and nature of housing developments within the area, and the rate and scope of non-residential development within the district. Some changes in plans might be necessary depending upon unforeseen future developments. Adaptations can, of course, be made.

School officials are to be commended for having been able to provide quality educational facilities and programs for the children and youth of the Ross Township School Corporation in the immediate past. By exercising the same kind of diligence and commitment to current and future needs next needed steps will also be accomplished. A firm and defensible foundation for providing educational programs and services to the children and youth of the district in the years ahead has and is being built. The record of the past and of the present establishes a high level of expectancy for the future.

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